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Advancement of women: implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

Measures taken and progress achieved in follow-up to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/148, provides a review of the follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. In particular, the report focuses on the extent to which gender perspectives are reflected in selected intergovernmental processes of the United Nations. The report concludes with recommendations for further measures to enhance the implementation of gender equality mandates.

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I. Introduction

1. While the responsibility for the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly rests primarily with Governments, the realization of gender equality and women's empowerment is a collective endeavour to which stakeholders at all levels should contribute. Normative frameworks elaborated at the international level have a key role to play in guiding changes at the regional and national levels. As the body of global norms and policy guidelines evolves, it is critical that intergovernmental bodies integrate gender perspectives in their work.

2. This has been reiterated by the General Assembly in its annual resolution on follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, the most recent of which was 67/148, whereby the Assembly reiterated its call upon the bodies of the United Nations system to increase efforts to fully mainstream a gender perspective into all issues under their consideration and within their mandates.

3. The present report, prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/148 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/9, focuses on the extent to which selected intergovernmental processes of the United Nations integrate gender perspectives.[1] It provides a quantitative and qualitative assessment of progress achieved and remaining gaps through an analysis of reports of the Secretary-General to and of resolutions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the functional commissions of the Council. The report could serve as a monitoring tool for the Assembly, allowing it to exercise its oversight role with regard to the implementation of resolution 67/148.

II. Integration of a gender perspective in selected intergovernmental bodies

4. The methodology and findings of a content analysis of the reports of the Secretary-General to and the resolutions of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly and the 2012 sessions of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions are presented below.

A. Methodology

5. The documents reviewed were examined for evidence of the incorporation of a gender perspective, as determined by the presence of the following words: gender, sex, woman, man, girl, boy, female, male, sexual, reproductive and maternal (including their plural forms). Documents with at least one occurrence of a keyword

[1] The present report complements the annual report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (see E/2013/71) and his annual reports to the Commission on the Status of Women on actions of Member States for gender mainstreaming at the national level, with a particular focus on the Commission's priority theme (see E/CN.6/2013/3 and E/CN.6/2013/4, both of which reflected good practices by Member States).

were considered to have included a gender perspective. False positive results, for instance "man-made disaster" or "sexual exploitation" with no mention of the sex of the victims/survivors or of the perpetrators, were discounted.

6. While the list of words selected excludes others that could arguably reflect a gender perspective, the selected words are those most often found in reports and resolutions that address gender equality issues. However, the assessment of the inclusion of a gender perspective went beyond the mere mention of these keywords. Documents that passed this first filter were analysed in more depth to assess the extent to which a gender perspective had indeed been reflected.

7. Resolutions and reports of the Secretary-General available in the Official Document System of the United Nations as at 15 June 2013 were examined. Although documents considered under an agenda item or sub-item that focused specifically on gender equality issues may be automatically assumed to reflect a gender perspective, they were included in the analysis because they provided a measure of the degree to which attention was paid to gender equality issues in the work of intergovernmental bodies. Where documents were submitted to more than one intergovernmental body, each occurrence was counted, since consideration by each body was considered to be an additional opportunity for mainstreaming gender equality issues into the intergovernmental process.

B. Quantitative findings

8. There were multiple opportunities for the incorporation of gender perspectives into the work of intergovernmental bodies. In total, 272 reports of the Secretary-General were considered and 324 resolutions were adopted by the intergovernmental bodies under review. The General Assembly alone considered 214 reports of the Secretary-General and adopted 257 resolutions at its sixty-seventh session.[2] The Economic and Social Council at its substantive and resumed substantive sessions in 2012 reviewed 17 reports of the Secretary-General and adopted 37 resolutions. The functional commissions — excluding the Commission on the Status of Women, which focuses exclusively on gender equality issues — considered 41 reports of the Secretary-General and adopted 30 resolutions at their sessions in 2012.

9. A number of these resolutions have an exclusive focus on gender equality issues. Consideration by the General Assembly of agenda items or sub-items dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women led to the adoption of six resolutions during the sixty-seventh session. These included resolutions on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control (67/48), the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women (67/144), trafficking in women and girls (67/145), intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilations (67/146), supporting efforts to end obstetric fistula (67/147) and the annual resolution calling for the present report (67/148).

10. The Economic and Social Council adopted annual resolutions on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (2012/24) and on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women (2012/25). The Commission on Narcotic Drugs, a functional commission of

[2] Based on documents available in the Official Document System of the United Nations as at 15 June 2013.

the Council, adopted a resolution on promoting strategies and measures addressing specific needs of women in the context of comprehensive and integrated drug demand reduction programmes and strategies (55/5).

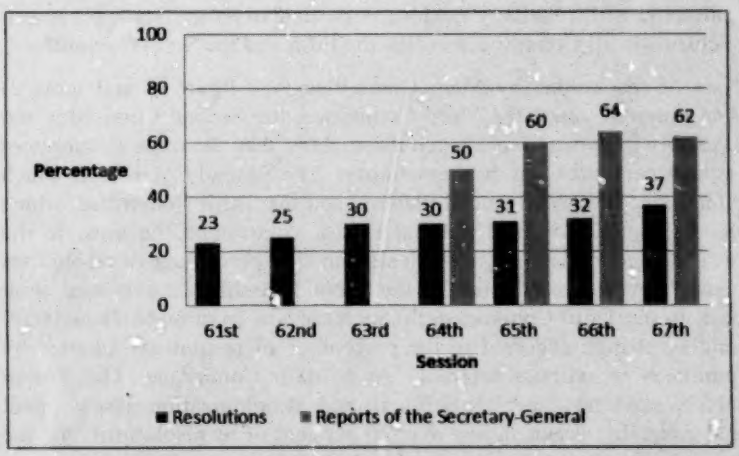
11. While it is crucial that intergovernmental bodies address gender equality issues through dedicated resolutions, it is equally important that they mainstream a gender perspective into resolutions dealing with other questions and thus integrate gender equality considerations as a cross-cutting issue in all areas under discussion. The findings of the present report reveal an upward trend in the reflection of a gender perspective in the resolutions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the functional commissions of the Council.

1. General Assembly

Reports of the Secretary-General

12. Reports of the Secretary-General often form the basis for discussions that lead to the adoption of resolutions in intergovernmental bodies. Of the reports of the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, 62 per cent included a gender perspective (see figure I and table 1). This represents a slight decrease, by two percentage points, from the sixty-sixth session. However, the high percentage of reports with a gender perspective indicates that gender equality issues are seen as relevant across a range of substantive areas.

Figure I
Trends in the share of General Assembly documents that include a gender perspective



13. Across the Main Committees of the General Assembly, the picture was uneven. While there was a noticeable increase in the percentage of reports to the Fourth and First Committees of the General Assembly that included a gender perspective (an increase of 10 and 9 percentage points respectively), there was a decrease of 7 percentage points in such reports to the Fifth Committee. Given the high number of reports of the Secretary-General that were considered by the Fifth Committee, it is likely that this decrease played a major role in the slight decline observed in the share of reports with a gender perspective submitted to the Assembly as a whole.

Table 1
Number and percentage of reports of the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly that include a gender perspective

Body to which report is allocated	*Total reports*	*Number including a gender perspective*	*Percentage including a gender perspective*
Plenary	37	30	81
First Committee	27	13	48
Second Committee	28	18	64
Third Committee	43	37	86
Fourth Committee	20	11	55
Fifth Committee	68	30	44
Sixth Committee	14	9	64
Total	**214**	**132**	**62**

Note: Of the 214 reports of the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly, some were considered under more than one agenda item and some agenda items were allocated to more than one Committee. The breakdown by Committee thus adds up to more than the total number of reports submitted to the Assembly.

Resolutions

14. Only 37 per cent of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly integrated a gender perspective. Nevertheless, this shows progress from a plateau of around 31 per cent over the previous four sessions of the Assembly (see figure I).[3] This increase, although still relatively modest, is particularly significant because it reflects improvements in all Committees except the Fifth and the Sixth Committees.

15. An analysis of resolutions by Main Committee (see figure II and table 2) shows that, as in previous years, the Third Committee, the Second Committee and the General Assembly in plenary were much more likely than the other Committees to integrate a gender perspective in their resolutions. The Second Committee, which is responsible for economic and financial matters, and the Third Committee, which focuses on social, humanitarian and cultural issues, contributed the most to the change that was observed in the sixty-seventh session. The percentage of resolutions including a gender perspective adopted by the Second Committee increased from 33 to 50 per cent; in the Third Committee, the increase was from 64 to 71 per cent. Little corresponding change occurred in the percentage of resolutions adopted by the other Committees or without reference to a Main Committee. The Fourth Committee, which examines special political and decolonization issues, paid attention to gender equality issues in just over 20 per cent of its resolutions, and the First Committee (disarmament and international security), the Fifth Committee (administrative and budgetary matters) and Sixth Committee (legal questions) did so in less than 10 per cent of their resolutions.

[3] These earlier findings are based on the analysis carried out for previous reports of the Secretary-General (A/62/178, A/63/217, A/64/218, A/65/204, A/66/211 and A/67/185). It must be noted that the results of the analysis carried out up to the sixty-third session of the General Assembly are not fully comparable, as the content analysis relied on a smaller list of words (gender, sex, woman, girl, female and sexual).

Figure II
Trends in the share of resolutions of the General Assembly that include a gender perspective, by Main Committee

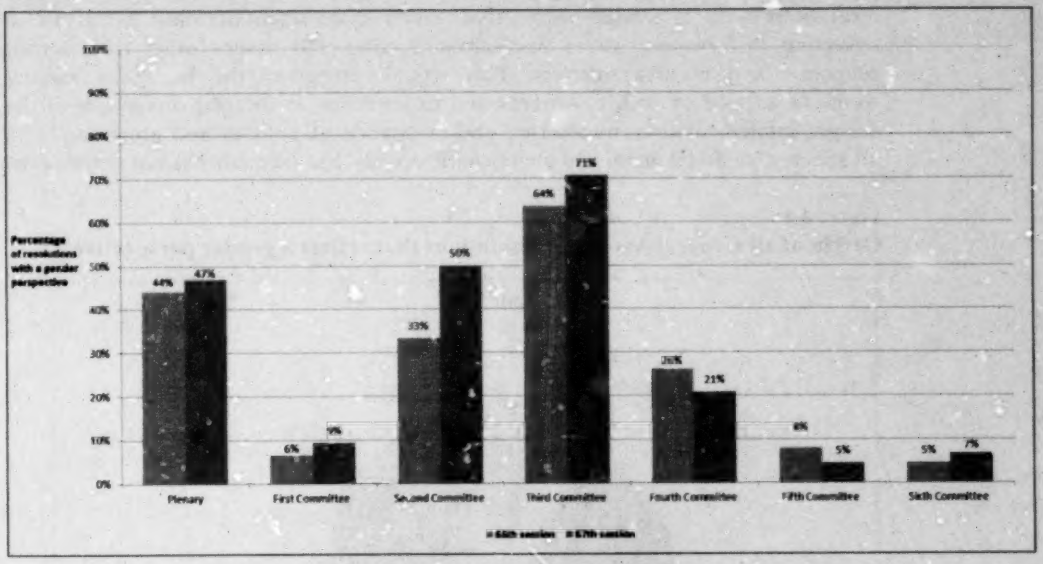


Table 2
Number and percentage of General Assembly resolutions that include a gender perspective

Originating body	*Total resolutions*	*Number including a gender perspective*	*Percentage including a gender perspective*
Plenary	49	23	47
First Committee	53	5	9
Second Committee	36	18	50
Third Committee	58	41	71
Fourth Committee	24	5	21
Fifth Committee	22	1	5
Sixth Committee	15	1	7
Total	**257**	**94**	**37**

16. An alternative perspective is to examine the contribution made by the Main Committees and the General Assembly in plenary to the pool of Assembly resolutions with a gender perspective (see figure III and table 3). Although it was responsible for only 23 per cent of all resolutions adopted by the Assembly, the Third Committee accounted for 44 per cent of all Assembly resolutions that included a gender perspective. The plenary accounted for 24 per cent and the Second Committee for 19 per cent. The First Committee, which accounted for 21 per cent of all Assembly resolutions, contributed only 5 per cent of the resolutions with a gender perspective. The Fifth and Sixth Committees each

accounted for only 1 per cent of such resolutions while contributing 9 and 6 per cent, respectively, of all Assembly resolutions.

17. In order to significantly increase the proportion of General Assembly resolutions with a gender perspective, much more attention must be given to reflecting this perspective in resolutions dealing with issues other than social, economic and political matters. This would strengthen the basis for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all spheres, so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.

Figure III
Origin of all General Assembly resolutions that reflect a gender perspective

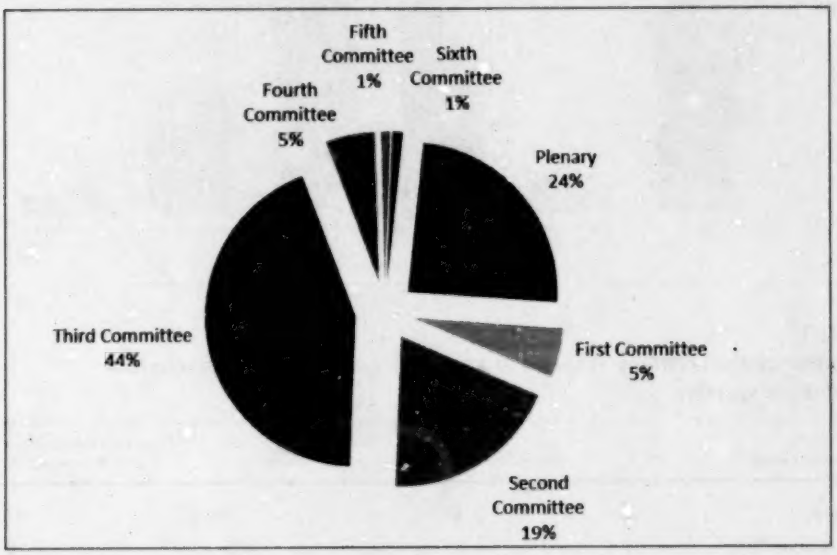


Table 3
Origin of all General Assembly resolutions and of all General Assembly resolutions that include a gender perspective

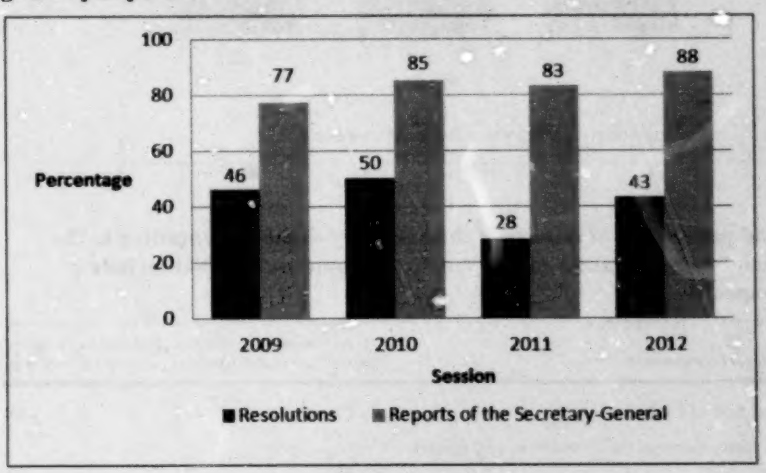
Originating body	*Percentage of all General Assembly resolutions*	*Percentage of all General Assembly resolutions with a gender perspective*
Plenary	19	24
First Committee	21	5
Second Committee	14	19
Third Committee	23	44
Fourth Committee	9	5
Fifth Committee	9	1
Sixth Committee	6	1

2. Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions

Reports of the Secretary-General

18. As for the General Assembly, the reports of the Secretary-General submitted to the Economic and Social Council in 2012 were more likely than resolutions were to include a gender perspective (see figure IV and table 4). Reflecting an increase of 5 percentage points compared to 2011, nearly 9 out of 10 reports of the Secretary-General submitted to the Council in 2012 included a gender perspective.

Figure IV
Trends in the share of Economic and Social Council documents that include a gender perspective



19. A sharp decrease was recorded, however, in the percentage of reports with a gender perspective submitted to the functional commissions (see figure V and table 4): while in 2011 74 per cent of reports reflected a gender perspective, in 2012 only 41 per cent of reports did so. Various factors may account for this drop. One is the absence of reports submitted to the Commission on Sustainable Development, which did not meet in 2012 because of the holding of the United Nations Conference in Sustainable Development in June of that year. In 2011, five of the six reports submitted to the Commission had integrated a gender perspective. In addition, there was a decrease in the share of reports submitted to the Statistical Commission that included a gender perspective (from 50 per cent in 2011 to 23 per cent in 2012) and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (from 100 per cent in 2011 to 33 per cent in 2012). It must be noted, though, that the number of reports considered was small (see table 4).

Figure V
Trends in the share of functional commission documents that include a gender perspective

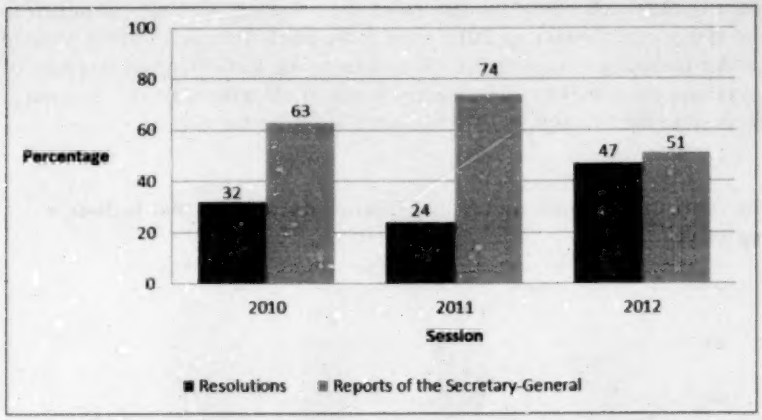


Table 4
Number and percentage of reports of the Secretary-General submitted to the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions that include a gender perspective

Body to which report is submitted	*Total reports*	*Number including a gender perspective*	*Percentage including a gender perspective*
Economic and Social Council	17	15	88
Functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council[a]	41	21	51
Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice[b]	11	7	64
Commission on Narcotic Drugs[b]	5	1	20
Commission on Population and Development	4	4	100
Commission on Science and Technology for Development	3	1	33
Commission for Social Development	5	5	100
Statistical Commission	13	3	23

[a] These results do not include the Commission on the Status of Women, owing to its exclusive focus on gender equality issues, or the Commission on Sustainable Development and the United Nations Forum on Forests, which did not hold a session in 2012.

[b] The Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice also considered reports of the Secretariat, which were included in the analysis.

Resolutions

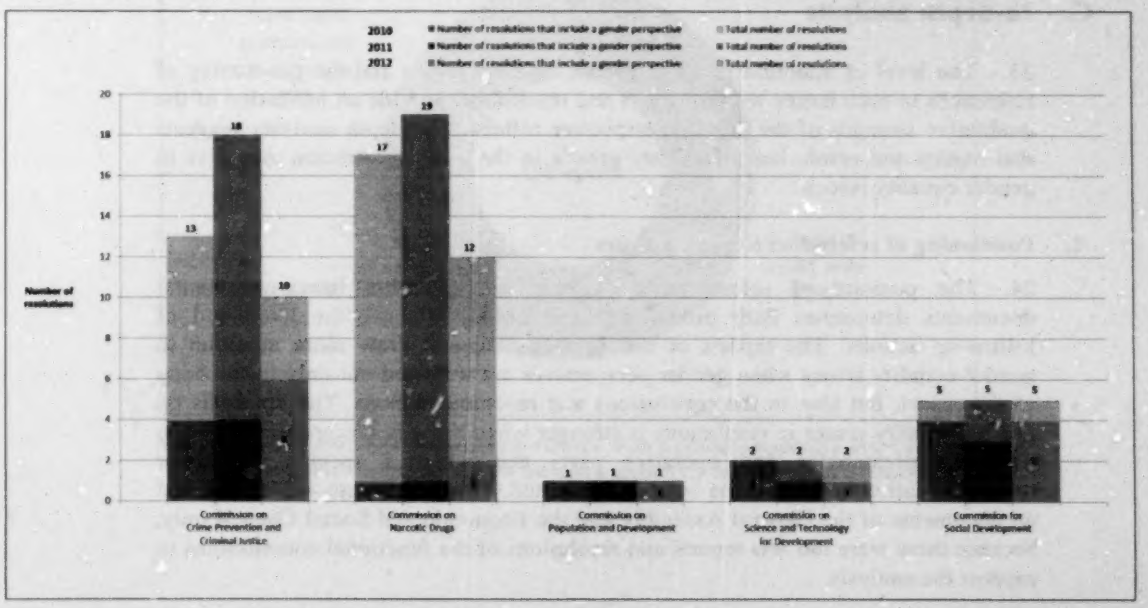
20. A gender perspective was reflected in 43 per cent of the resolutions adopted by the Economic and Social Council during its 2012 substantive sessions (see figure IV and table 5), reflecting a significant increase compared to 2011, when only 28 per cent of resolutions integrated a gender perspective. This brings the Council closer to the percentages recorded in 2009 (45 per cent) and 2010 (50 per cent).

21. On the whole, the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council (excluding the Commission on the Status of Women) paid more attention to gender equality issues in 2012 than they had done in the previous year, with 47 per cent of their 2012 resolutions reflecting a gender perspective compared to 24 per cent in 2011 (see figure V). This positive development also contributed to the increase observed in the proportion of Council resolutions that included a gender perspective, as the work of the functional commissions is closely linked to that of the Council. In 2012, 38 per cent of the resolutions adopted by the Council at its substantive sessions had originally been drafted by the functional commissions.[4]

22. Figure VI and table 5 provide a breakdown of resolutions by functional commission. The increase in the proportion of resolutions with a gender perspective observed in 2012 for the functional commissions as a whole is mainly explained by the higher proportion of resolutions with a gender perspective adopted by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. In 2012, 6 of the 10 resolutions of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and 2 of the 12 resolutions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs integrated a gender perspective. The fact that these two commissions adopted fewer resolutions than they had in the previous year, however, contributed to an overall decline in the number of resolutions adopted by functional commissions, from 46 in 2011 to 30 in 2012.

Figure VI

Trends in the share of resolutions of the functional commissions that include a gender perspective



Note: This figure does not include the Commission on the Status of Women and the functional commissions that did not hold a session in 2012.

[4] This figure includes the Commission on the Status of Women.

Table 5
Number and percentage of resolutions of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions that include a gender perspective

Originating body	*Total resolutions*	*Number including a gender perspective*	*Percentage including a gender perspective*
Economic and Social Council	37	16	43
Functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council[a]	30	14	47
Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice	10	6	60
Commission on Narcotic Drugs	12	2	17
Commission on Population and Development	1	1	100
Commission on Science and Technology for Development	2	1	50
Commission for Social Development	5	4	80
Statistical Commission[b]	0	–	–

[a] These results do not include the Commission on the Status of Women, owing to its exclusive focus on gender equality issues, or the Commission on Sustainable Development and the United Nations Forum on Forests, which did not hold a session in 2012.
[b] The Statistical Commission traditionally adopts decisions.

C. In-depth analysis

23. The level of attention given to gender equality issues and the positioning of references to such issues within reports and resolutions provide an indication of the qualitative strength of the gender perspective reflected. In-depth analysis suggests that reports and resolutions often vary greatly in the level of attention they give to gender equality issues.

1. Positioning of references to gender issues

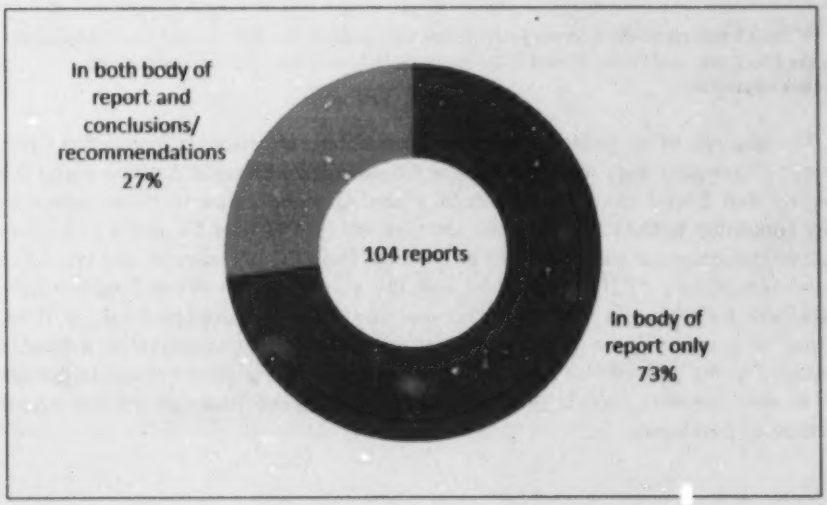
24. The position of references to gender issues within intergovernmental documents determines their prominence and could influence the likelihood of follow-up actions. The reports of the Secretary-General draw more attention to gender equality issues when gender perspectives are reflected not only in the body of the report, but also in the conclusions and recommendations. The emphasis on gender equality issues in resolutions is stronger when these issues are referred to in both the preambular and operative parts and when a specific action or recommendation to address the issues is indicated. This assessment was carried out on documents of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council only, because there were too few reports and resolutions of the functional commissions to support the analysis.

25. An analysis of the positioning of references to gender in reports of the Secretary-General demonstrates that gender equality issues are not yet prioritized systematically (see figures VII and VIII). In most reports that included a gender perspective, references to gender appeared exclusively in the body of the reports, not in the conclusions and/or recommendations. Of the reports with a gender perspective, only 27 per cent of those submitted to the General Assembly and 38 per

cent of those submitted to the Economic and Social Council included references to gender in both the body and in the conclusions and/or recommendations. This means that opportunities are not systematically seized to recommend actions in response to gender equality-related issues.

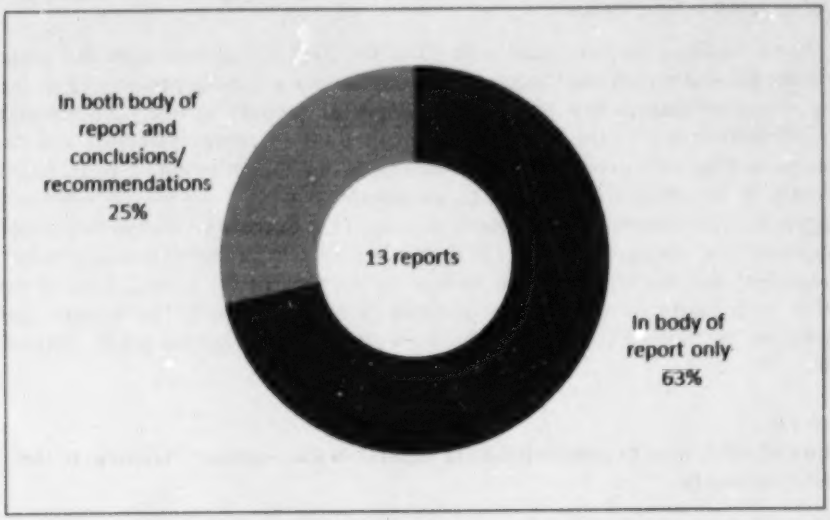
26. These findings are consistent with those for 2011 and demonstrate that more efforts are needed within the United Nations to include a gender perspective in the policy recommendations that the Secretary-General submits to intergovernmental bodies. Improvements in this sense can be made by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council explicitly requesting that this information be included in reports to be submitted to them. In its resolution 67/255 on human resources management, for instance, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to provide a comprehensive report with the aim of further refining the proposed mobility policy and specified that the report should include an analysis of the implications of the mobility and career development framework for gender parity, particularly for women from developing countries, including a plan on achieving the gender balance target.

Figure VII
Position of references to gender issues in reports of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly



Note: Of the 132 reports of the Secretary-General with a gender perspective that were submitted to the General Assembly, 28 did not include a section on conclusions and recommendations.

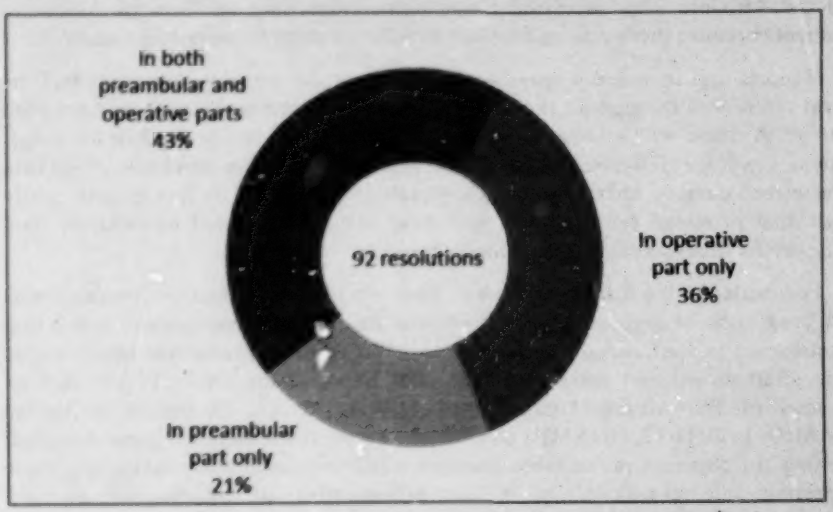
Figure VIII
Position of references to gender issues in reports of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council



Note: Of the 15 reports of the Secretary-General with a gender perspective that were submitted to the Economic and Social Council, 2 did not include a section on conclusions and recommendations.

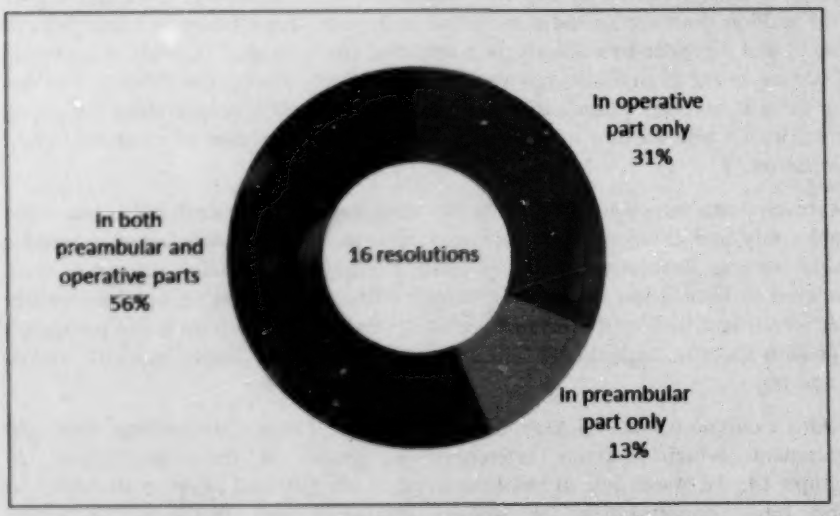
27. The analysis of the positioning of gender-related references revealed that when reference to gender issues was made in resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, prominence tended to be given to those issues in reports submitted to the Assembly and the Council (see figures IX and X). Gender-related references were most likely to be found in both the preambular and operative parts of resolutions of the Assembly and the Council. The second most likely scenario was the inclusion of a gender perspective in the operative part only, with no reference to gender in the preambular part. Few resolutions integrated a gender perspective in the preambular part only, with no recommendation related to gender made in the operative, action-oriented paragraphs. These findings are consistent with those of past years.

Figure IX
Position of references to gender issues in resolutions of the General Assembly



Note: Of the 94 resolutions of the General Assembly that integrated a gender perspective, 2 were declarations and thus did not have preambular and operative paragraphs.

Figure X
Position of references to gender issues in resolutions of the Economic and Social Council



2. Qualitative assessment

Methodology

28. Although gender perspectives may be reflected in key sections of a report or resolution, their impact depends on the strength of the language used in the reference. To assess this, reports of the Secretary-General and resolutions were

reviewed against qualitative variables. Reports were assessed qualitatively against two variables: the "coverage" of gender equality issues and the "quality" of the gender discussion. This assessment was carried out only on General Assembly documents because there was an adequate number of them to support the analysis.

29. Reports that included a specific section on gender equality issues, as well as several references throughout the rest of the report, were considered to have high coverage. A single reference or a few short references were defined as low coverage. Medium coverage fell somewhere in between. The quality analysis of reports characterized cursory references such as "including women" as low quality, while reports that provided precise facts, including sex-disaggregated quantitative data and/or gender analysis ranged from medium to high quality.

30. For example, the following excerpt from a report on budget performance was considered to be of high quality, as it showed that a gender perspective was being mainstreamed in staff support activities: To improve the reproductive health status of the international and national female staff, representing about 17 per cent of personnel of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) in 2011/12, UNAMID conducted awareness training and gynaecological screening for common preventable diseases while conscientiously taking a gender perspective into consideration in the procurement of pharmaceuticals and consumables (A/67/601, para. 69).

31. Another example of a document considered to be of high quality is the report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to the special session of the General Assembly on children (A/67/229). Unlike in many reports where the language remains gender-neutral when discussing children or youth, in this report the data provided is disaggregated by sex (for example: "Approximately 150 million girls and 73 million boys are sexually assaulted each year, many times en route to or at school.") and a gender-based analysis is included (for example: "Levels of access to HIV testing in the region also remain low, particularly among young men. For this group there is no entry point comparable to maternal health programmes for young women, which provide testing and services for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission.").

32. Resolutions, which tend to be shorter than reports, were analysed against one variable only and categorized as having a low, medium or high focus on gender equality issues. Resolutions that included a single, superficial reference were considered to have a low focus. Resolutions with a high focus on gender equality issues were identified by the occurrence of a keyword in more than one paragraph and/or with specific language on the situation and needs of women and girls and/or men and boys.

33. One example is General Assembly resolution 67/196 on international trade and development, which contains references to gender in three paragraphs. In paragraph 14, the Assembly stressed the need to identify and develop strategies to expand trade opportunities for women producers and facilitate the active participation of women in national, regional and global trade decision-making structures and processes, thereby ensuring that women- and men-owned businesses and farms have equal opportunities in markets. In paragraph 20, the Assembly invited the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to continue to undertake policy analysis, including from a gender perspective. In paragraph 23, it requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the

resolution and developments in the multilateral trading system, including their impact on women and men.

34. While the approach adopted for the qualitative assessment undoubtedly has limitations, it is an important step towards differentiating perfunctory references to gender-related terminology from more attentive analysis of gender equality issues. The findings also constitute an important step in understanding progress in incorporating a gender perspective into the work of intergovernmental bodies and the United Nations as a whole.

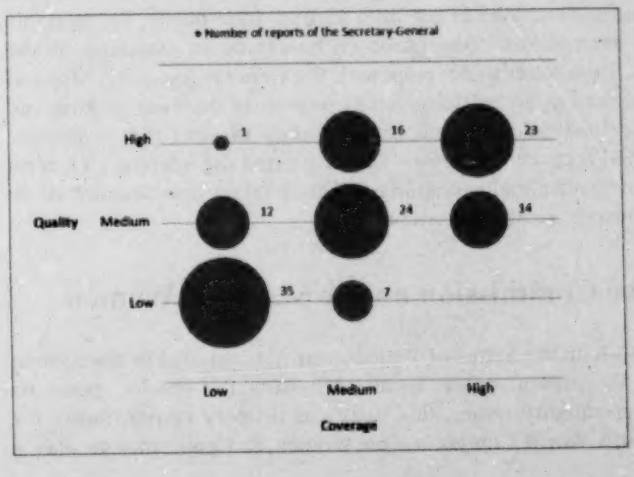
Reports of the Secretary-General

35. The distribution of the reports of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly across the two variables, coverage and quality, is illustrated in figure XI below. The distribution of reports across the two axes demonstrates that reports varied widely both in the coverage of gender equality issues and in the characteristics of these inclusions. There tended to be a general correlation between coverage and quality: reports that devote little space to gender equality issues were also likely to have only superficial references, while reports with extensive coverage tended to include more precise information and deeper analysis. Although there were more reports with low coverage and of low quality than reports with high coverage and of high quality, a significant number of reports were at a minimum of medium coverage and quality (77 out of 132 reports, or 58 per cent).

36. The percentage of reports rated as high/high, medium/high or high/medium dropped from 45 per cent during the sixty-sixth session to 40 per cent during the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly, as more reports were rated as medium/medium. While this finding should be interpreted with caution, in particular since fewer reports of the Secretary-General were submitted during the sixty-seventh session than during the sixty-sixth session (214 and 249 respectively), it will be important to monitor the situation in the future to ascertain the consistency of this apparent downward turn.

Figure XI

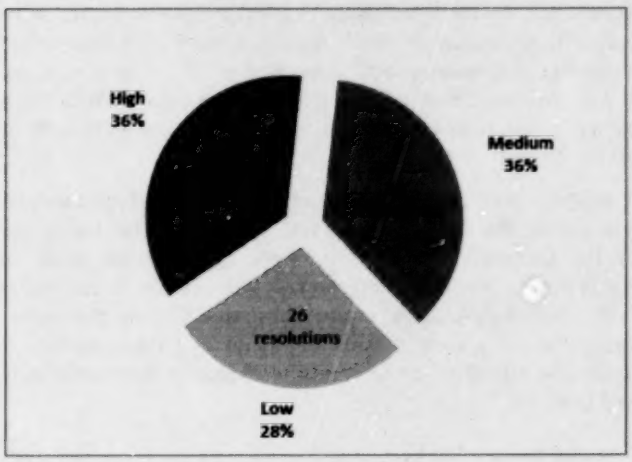
Coverage and quality of gender references in reports of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly, by frequency



Resolutions

37. While only 37 per cent of General Assembly resolutions included a gender perspective, the 94 resolutions that did include one tended to do so in a fairly clear manner. Over 70 per cent of those resolutions show a high or medium focus on gender equality issues (see figure XII). This means that the keywords indicating a gender perspective were found in more than one paragraph and/or that there was specific language on the situation and needs of women and girls and/or men and boys. This percentage is comparable to that found in resolutions adopted during the sixty-sixth session, and suggests that most resolutions of the Assembly that include references related to gender reflect genuine attention to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Figure XII
Extent of focus on gender equality issues in General Assembly resolutions that include a gender perspective



38. Many of the medium- and high-focus resolutions included paragraphs expressing recognition of the specific contribution and situation of women and girls and/or containing proposals for actions to take into account their needs. For example, in resolution 67/231 on international cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development, the General Assembly stressed the importance of the full and equal participation of women in decision-making and of gender mainstreaming in developing and implementing disaster risk reduction, preparedness, response and recovery strategies, and requested the Secretary-General to continue ensuring that gender mainstreaming is better taken into account in all aspects of humanitarian responses and activities.

III. Contribution of the Commission on the Status of Women

39. While the Commission on the Status of Women was not included in the content analysis undertaken for the present report to avoid biasing the results, given its exclusive focus on gender equality issues, this body has primary responsibility for the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and continues to play a

major role in promoting the strategy of gender mainstreaming. In accordance with paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 67/148, the Commission continues to play a catalytic role in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women based on the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and in promoting and monitoring gender mainstreaming within the United Nations system.

40. At its fifty-sixth session, in 2012, the Commission considered the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges. While extensive substantive documentation was prepared by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in support of the session, and rich discussions were held during the session, the Commission did not adopt a set of agreed conclusions on this theme. However, summaries by the Chair on the high-level round table and the two panels on the priority theme were transmitted to the Economic and Social Council as input for the annual ministerial review at its substantive session of 2012, and the ministerial declaration adopted that year by the Council on promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work to eradicate poverty in the context of inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth at all levels for achieving the Millennium Development Goals reiterated the importance of empowering rural women as critical agents for enhancing agricultural and rural development and food security and nutrition.

41. The Commission also adopted key resolutions during the session, providing policy guidance to Member States and other stakeholders, including on gender equality and the empowerment of women in natural disasters (resolution 56/2), eliminating maternal mortality and morbidity through the empowerment of women (resolution 56/3) and indigenous women: key actors in poverty and hunger eradication (resolution 56/4). These resolutions, which are a repository of normative guidance, provide other intergovernmental bodies with language and perspectives that can help them to strengthen the gender equality dimensions of their work and outcomes.

42. This potential of the work and outcomes of the Commission was evidenced, for instance, in General Assembly resolution 67/153 on the rights of indigenous peoples, in which the Assembly recalled the two resolutions of the Commission on indigenous women (resolutions 49/7 of 2005 and 56/4 of 2012). Also, at least three resolutions adopted by the Assembly at its sixty-seventh session (67/172 on the protection of migrants, 67/195 on information and communications technologies for development and 67/202 on entrepreneurship for development) referred to or used paragraphs from the agreed conclusions on access and participation of women and girls in education, training and science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work.[5]

43. The agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status on Women at its fifty-fifth session thus not only play an important role at the national level, by providing action-oriented recommendations to fully implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special

[5] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2011, Supplement No. 7* (E/2011/27), chap. I, sect. A.

session of the General Assembly, but are also a crucial tool for encouraging other intergovernmental bodies to pay greater attention to gender equality.

44. Recognizing the critical role of the agreed conclusions, UN-Women designed a comprehensive strategy in preparation for the fifty-seventh session of the Commission, the priority theme of which was "Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls", to ensure that deliberations would result in a strong outcome document. Efforts focused on preparing a strong substantive basis on the priority theme and on building broad-based support for strengthening normative standards. UN-Women mobilized Member States, the United Nations system, civil society, academic experts and the private sector through a range of activities, including an expert group meeting, an online discussion and a stakeholders' forum. The Entity's unprecedented scope and level of preparations laid the groundwork for the highly successful fifty-seventh session of the Commission. A fuller account of the extensive preparations for the fifty-seventh session and its outcomes will be provided in the next report on measures taken and progress achieved in follow-up to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, which will cover the 2013 sessions of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

IV. Factors accounting for the successful integration of a gender perspective in intergovernmental outcomes

45. The present section focuses on two of the Main Committees of the General Assembly — the First and the Second Committees — and examines the mechanisms through which they increased attention to gender perspectives in their work during 2012 and highlights lessons for the work of other bodies.

46. The percentage of resolutions of the Second Committee that integrated a gender perspective increased significantly, from 33 per cent in the sixty-sixth session to 50 per cent in the sixty-seventh session. For instance, an annual resolution on international trade and development (the most recent of which is General Assembly resolution 67/196), which previously had included no gender perspectives, in the seventy-seventh session included references to gender in three paragraphs. In the First Committee, the increase was not significant: 5 of 53 resolutions integrated a gender perspective. While the percentage increased only marginally, from 6 per cent in the sixty-sixth session to 9 per cent in the sixty-seventh session, the First Committee adopted, for the second time, a resolution on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control that brings a strong gender equality perspective to its work.

47. The progress that occurred in the Second Committee was probably in part due to the holding of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and, especially, the catalytic role played by UN-Women. In the lead up to and during the Conference, which was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012, UN-Women, in partnership with other stakeholders, undertook extensive mobilization efforts to ensure that gender equality issues would be adequately discussed. UN-Women made a strong case for the centrality of gender equality and women's empowerment and organized a number of events to bring this message to the fore. Gender equality issues were subsequently well reflected in the outcome document. One of the

priority areas of the framework for action was dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women and many of the other priority areas mainstreamed a gender perspective.

48. The discussions held in Rio de Janeiro and the outcome of the Conference undoubtedly influenced the negotiations of the Second Committee during the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly: compared with previous sessions, in fact, there was a substantial increase in the proportion of resolutions adopted under the agenda item on sustainable development, which included a gender perspective. This underscores the importance of gender equality advocates and, in particular, of UN-Women engaging in major intergovernmental processes focused on sectoral issues, as these in turn influence discussions in the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental bodies.

49. The heightened collaboration between Member States and UN-Women during the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly also played a key role in influencing outcomes within the Second Committee. On the basis of the findings of the previous report of the Secretary-General on measures taken and progress achieved in follow-up to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (A/67/185) and pursuant to General Assembly resolution 66/132, in which the Assembly reiterated its call to the bodies of the United Nations system to increase efforts to fully mainstream a gender perspective into all issues under their consideration, UN-Women increased its outreach to the Second Committee. A one-page infographic on the integration of a gender perspective in the work of the General Assembly was produced to draw attention to areas of progress and remaining gaps.[6] In addition, UN-Women highlighted untapped opportunities for better reflecting gender equality issues in the work of the Second Committee. Delegations in the Second Committee welcomed these efforts and requested technical support to increase the attention paid to gender equality issues in a number of resolutions.

50. Thus, proactive outreach on the part of UN-Women enables intergovernmental bodies to monitor the progress resulting from their efforts to mainstream a gender perspective in their work. The technical expertise provided by UN-Women on gender equality and the empowerment of women also helps to build momentum for greater attention to gender equality issues in the range of topics discussed in intergovernmental forums.

51. The example provided by the First Committee shows how a gender perspective can be integrated into work that previously gave little attention to gender equality issues. During the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the first resolution on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control was adopted (65/69). This short resolution called for the topic to be discussed again at the sixty-seventh session, at which time the resolution was expanded to include issues such as women's participation in the design and implementation of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control efforts and women's role in preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (67/48). In that resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its

[6] See www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/documents/ga67/Infographics_gender_perspective_in_work_of_UNGA.pdf.

sixty-eighth session. This will provide an opportunity for the First Committee to further deepen the focus of its discussion on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. It is likely that, over time, deliberations under other agenda items in the First Committee will benefit from the discussions held on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

V. Integrating a gender perspective in the post-2015 development agenda: the role of UN-Women

52. As the target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals approaches, two main processes are currently under way to identify the shape and priorities of a post-2015 development framework. One of these processes focuses on advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015; the other, on defining a set of sustainable development goals. While these processes are currently distinct, they are widely expected to converge at a later date. Both processes will, in the future, have an impact on the mainstreaming of gender equality issues in the work of intergovernmental bodies.

53. The process of advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 finds its origin in the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (see Assembly resolution 65/1), in which Heads of State and Government requested the Secretary-General to make recommendations for further steps to advance the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 and the President of the General Assembly to organize a special event in 2013 to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. In support of these discussions, the Secretary-General appointed the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network. The United Nations Development Group facilitated national dialogues in more than 80 countries and convened 11 multi-stakeholder thematic consultations. The web platform "The World We Want 2015" (www.worldwewant2015.org), a cooperative effort of United Nations system and civil society organizations, provides space for intensive consultations and exchange of information. A number of reports with recommendations on the post-2015 development agenda have already been issued by the United Nations System Task Team on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda, the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network and the United Nations Global Compact. A special event on efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, to be held on 25 September 2013, is expected to result in a short outcome document that will include a road map for the post-2015 development agenda.

54. The definition of a set of sustainable development goals is a Member State-led process that was launched with the adoption of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. The Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, which is composed of Member States, will make a proposal on sustainable development goals to the General Assembly in September 2014. The Open Working Group is currently in an information-gathering and stock-taking phase, and a series of sessions are taking place on a wide range of thematic areas. The United Nations system provides technical support to the Open Working Group and works in consultation with Member States, civil society partners, the

private sector, academics and foundations at the international, regional and country levels. In addition, an intergovernmental committee of experts on sustainable development financing is expected to propose a financing strategy to the General Assembly by September 2014.

55. The engagement of UN-Women in these two processes is intended to ensure the inclusion of a strong focus on gender equality. The Entity is pursuing a twin-track strategy that calls for a stand-alone gender equality goal and for the integration of gender equality considerations in other goals through gender-sensitive targets and indicators.[7] Building on the lessons learned from the Millennium Development Goals, UN-Women has developed a vision for a new gender equality goal that would address the structural barriers that prevent the achievement of equality between women and men. This goal would be articulated around three target areas: women's freedom from violence, gender equality in capabilities and resources, and gender equality in decision-making power and voice. A human rights approach underlies these three elements: every woman has the right to live free of violence, to have equal access to health, education, resources such as land and financial services, and decent work, and to participate equally in decision-making from the household level to the highest levels of government. Women's enjoyment of those rights is the prerequisite for women to fulfil their potential and for societies to develop democratically and peacefully.

56. UN-Women is working to identify a set of indicators that are most critical for the transformation of gender-based discrimination and inequalities. These are based on a minimum set of indicators formally endorsed by the Statistical Commission in February 2013, covering economic structures, participation in productive activities, access to resources, education, health and related services, participation in public life and decision-making and the enjoyment of human rights, including the right to live free from violence. While these indicators are primarily being developed to measure progress and ensure accountability on a stand-alone gender equality goal, some could also be used for mainstreaming a gender perspective into other goals, depending on the content of the new framework.

57. To make this transformative vision a reality, UN-Women is engaging closely in the two processes outlined above. For instance, it actively participated in the national consultations on the post-2015 development agenda organized by the United Nations Development Group and, together with the United Nation Children's Fund, it led the global consultation on inequalities. In addition, UN-Women provides technical expertise to the Open Working Group through its participation in the United Nations technical support team and the three working groups of the United Nations Task Team on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda (on monitoring and target setting, global partnerships, and financing for sustainable development). In the framework of the implementation of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development outcome document, inter-agency mechanisms have provided yet another avenue for UN-Women to contribute to the integration of a gender perspective in the thematic work of United Nations partners.

58. While it remains unclear what the final outcome of the post-2015 and sustainable development goals processes will be, the recognition of the centrality of

[7] The position paper of UN-Women is available from www.unwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/post-2015-case-for-standalone-gender-goal.pdf.

gender equality in the new framework is evidence of some success. For instance, the global consultation on inequalities and the three key reports with recommendations on the post-2015 development agenda included calls for a stand-alone goal on gender equality.[8] In the framework of the Open Working Group, gender equality and the empowerment of women will be discussed as a thematic area at the February 2014 session, and gender equality issues and women's empowerment have been addressed frequently in the sessions that have been held thus far.

59. In the months to come, UN-Women will continue to build a strong substantive case and to foster support for a transformative development framework to achieve gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment. It will also leverage key intergovernmental events — in particular, the fifty-eighth and the fifty-ninth sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women, which will focus respectively on achieving the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls and on the forthcoming review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action — to highlight how a focus on gender equality can strengthen the post-2015 agenda. Successfully placing gender equality at the centre of the new development framework will increase the chances that gender equality dimensions will be reflected routinely and regularly in the work of intergovernmental bodies, thus increasing opportunities to address key issues that can transform the lives of women and girls, as well as men and boys, around the world.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

60. **Intergovernmental bodies are making progress in terms of reflecting, in a more systematic manner, a gender perspective in their work. An upward trend in the percentage of resolutions that included a gender perspective was recorded for the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and the functional commissions of the Council. Progress was particularly evident in the work of those bodies focusing on social or economic and political issues. A high number of reports of the Secretary-General continue to address gender equality issues but conclusions and recommendations do not yet systematically integrate a gender perspective.**

61. **A gender perspective is too seldom reflected in some areas of work, in particular in resolutions dealing with disarmament and related international security questions, political issues and decolonization, administrative and budgetary matters, and international legal matters.**

62. **The General Assembly may wish:**

(a) **To reaffirm the relevance of gender mainstreaming, as a globally accepted strategy for promoting the empowerment of women and achieving gender equality, in all issues considered by its Main Committees and subsidiary bodies, including disarmament and related international security questions, economic questions, social and humanitarian issues, political issues and**

[8] See the reports of the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network and the United Nations Global Compact.

decolonization, administrative and budgetary matters, and international legal matters;

(b) To reiterate its call upon all intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations system to fully mainstream a gender perspective into all issues under their consideration and within their mandates, as well as in all United Nations summits, conferences and special sessions and their follow-up processes;

(c) To request that reports of the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and their subsidiary bodies systematically address gender perspectives through the provision of sex- and age-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive analysis, and that conclusions and recommendations for further action address the situation and needs of women and men, so as to facilitate gender-sensitive policy development;

(d) To welcome ongoing efforts to mainstream a gender perspective in discussions on a post-2015 development framework and sustainable development goals, and call for gender equality and women's empowerment to be reflected as a stand-alone goal and to be integrated through targets and indicators into all goals of any new development framework;

(e) To call upon Governments and all stakeholders to use national and regional preparations for the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action to identify and strengthen opportunities for mainstreaming a gender perspective in all sectors and in all areas of development, including in the elaboration of the post-2015 development framework;

(f) To encourage UN-Women to continue to raise awareness of the need to mainstream a gender perspective in the work of intergovernmental bodies and to provide technical assistance, at the request of Governments, on strengthening the gender perspective in resolutions of intergovernmental bodies;

(g) To encourage the Secretary-General to publicize the findings of the present report in order to strengthen follow-up on these findings and accelerate the implementation of the resolution on Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.